

Irish National Opera in Smetana's comic folk opera

THE BARTERED BRIDE

(English Version: Leonard Hancock)

Brendan Cavanagh

Patricia Dolan

Elleen Donlon

Evelyn Dowling

Frank Dunne

Deirdre Grier-Delaney

Peter McBrien

Colette McGahon

Sean Mitten

Patrick Ring

Pat Sheridan

Piano: Veronica McSwiney

Margaret O'Sullivan

Production: Paddy Ryan

Settings: Kenneth Edwards

Costumes: Babs de Monte

Choreography: Breda Berkeley.

NATIONAL TOUR
1978~79



THE BARTERED BRIDE

BEDRICH SMETANA

(English translation: Leonard Hancock)



CAST



Kecal <i>a marriage broker</i>	SEAN MITTEN
Krušina , <i>a Bohemian peasant</i>	PETER McBRIEN
Ludmilla , <i>his wife</i>	EVELYN DOWLING
Mařenka , <i>their daughter</i>	EILEEN DONLON
Micha , <i>a landlord</i>	PAT SHERIDAN
Hata , <i>his wife</i>	PATRICIA DOLAN
Vášek , <i>their son</i>	PATRICK RING
Jenik , <i>Micha's son by an earlier marriage</i>	FRANK DUNNE
Ringmaster	BRENDAN CAVANAGH
Esmeralda	DEIRDRE GRIER-DELANEY
Jarmila	COLETTE McGAHON
Serving Man	WALTER HARRINGTON
Clowns	WALTER HARRINGTON, PAT RUST

Dancers/Chorus/Circus THE COMPANY

Piano: VERONICA McSWINEY

or

MARGARET O'SULLIVAN

Devised and Directed by	Paddy Ryan
Vocal Director	Gerald Duffy
Choreography	Breda Berkeley
Set Designed and Painted by	Kenneth Edwards
Costumes	Babs de Monte
Special Properties	Ken Mooney
Stage Director	Walter Harrington
Stage Management	Pat Rust, Monica Cowley, Tom Hanahoe

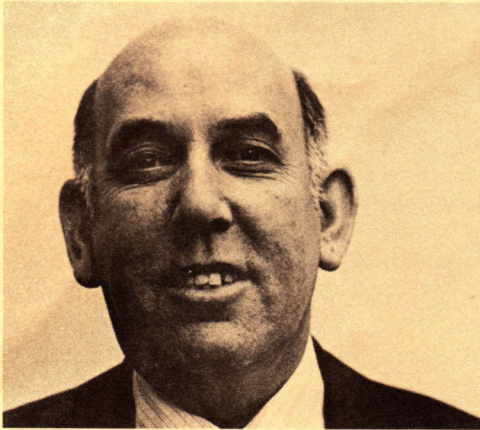
The action takes place in a Bohemian village in the late 18th century.

There will be an interval of 15 minutes.

These performances were made possible through the generous help of
An Chomhairle Éalaíon

THE CZECH NATIONAL SPIRIT AND "THE BARTERED BRIDE"

By IAN FOX



BRENDAN CAVANAGH ▲

Being in the very heart of Europe, Bohemia has long played an important role in the political and cultural movement of the Western World. It was in 1526 that the Hapsburgs took control of the area and from then until 1914 the Austro-Hungarian Empire ruled the country with increasing signs of resistance among the Bohemians themselves.

For nearly 300 years most artists sought employment elsewhere, many of course settling in the Empire's capital of Vienna. Johann Stamitz went to Mannheim to develop the famous 18th century orchestra there, so much admired by Mozart. Dussek, Breda and Reicha are among the composers who travelled as far afield as London and Berlin.

The Emperors at the start of the 19th century began to show a more benevolent interest in the provinces of Bohemia and Moravia, partly influenced by the French Revolution and partly in response to pleas for



PATRICIA DOLAN ▲

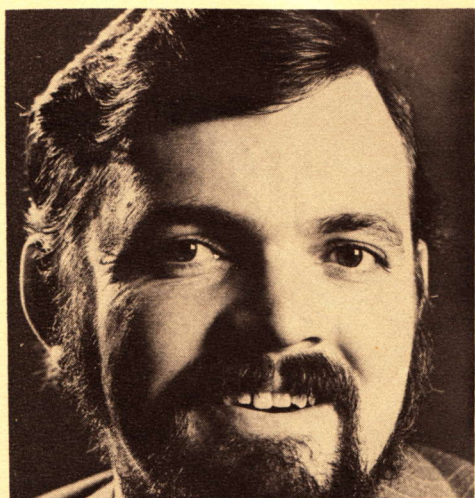
greater autonomy among the local aristocrats. The Czech language was given a more prominent place with the founding of such bilingual organisations as the Royal Bohemian Society of Sciences and the National Museum (1818). Although the German-speaking population of Bohemia still had distinct advantages over their Czech-speaking countrymen, the Hapsburgs tolerated cultural development and freedom. They were not so keen on political activities and under Prince Metternich's oppressive regime considerable unrest was growing. Revolution broke out in 1848 and attempted to replace the outdated institutions. Czech and German-speaking inhabitants joined forces to seek a new deal. A constitution was drafted and put into use but the new Emperor, Franz Josef, who ruled from 1848 to 1916, swept this all away in 1851 and attempted to rule as absolute master. Finally a sort of dual system



EILEEN DONLON ▲



EVELYN DOWLING ▲



FRANK DUNNE ▲

was worked out in 1867 with the Magyars dominating the Hungarian area and a loose group made up of Germans, Czechs, Poles and other nationalities known as "Austria". This scheme remained more or less intact until the start of World War I.

BEDRICH SMETANA [1824-1884]

Bedrich Smetana (1824-1884) was born in Litomysl where his father was a wealthy brewer, leasing Count Waldstein's brewery. The boy showed an early musical talent, playing the piano in public at the age of six and writing dance tunes two years later. He did not have a formal musical education but by the time he had reached his late 'teens was determined to make music his career. His father had fallen on difficult times and Smetana had to fend for himself when he went to Prague in 1843. Eventually he managed to get the post of music tutor to



DEIRDRE GRIER-DELANEY ▲

Count Thun's family while he studied privately. He became friendly with Listz and the Schumanns and managed to open his own music school in Prague.

Music played a very important role in the development of Czech nationalism and Smetana's work had the same kind of relevance to the growth of his nation's independence as the works of Synge, Yeats and others had in Ireland at the start of the 20th century.

Obviously any artist working in 19th century Bohemia was well aware of the political situation. Smetana was very much involved in the 1848 rising and found the restrictive years that followed particularly dispiriting. He worked extensively in Sweden, returning to Prague in 1861 as the defeat of the Emperor's troops by Napoleon III at Magenta and Solferino in 1859 had lead to an easing of pressures on the Czech and other subject races. The future began to look bright for Czech culture and the new Provisional Theatre in Prague was to be used for operatic as well as dramatic presentations.

There had been earlier attempts to create



PETER McBRIEN ▲



COLETTE MCGAHON ▲



SEAN MITTEN ▲

operas in Czech. The first important contribution had been "The Tinker" by Skroup, first performed in 1826. Little was to come of this until Smetana's time, however, and Skroup had to turn to German for his librettos in order to achieve performances. Although he had not been directly concerned with opera up to this time, Smetana recognised its great value to the developing national culture and set to work eagerly when two prizes were announced for the best historical and comic operas on Czech subjects for the new theatre. The Theatre was opened in 1862 and, after various setbacks, Smetana conducted his new work "The Brandenburgers of Bohemia" there at the start of 1856, winning the prize for the best historical opera.

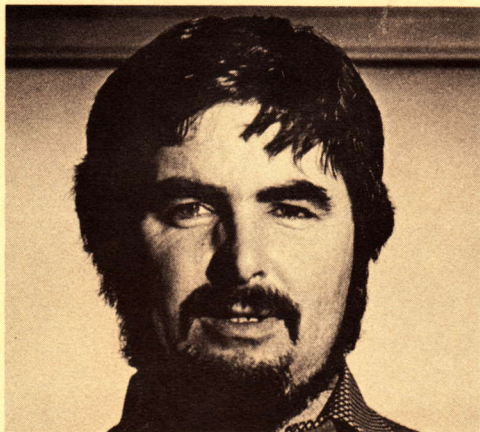
Meanwhile he was at work on a different project. He had a fierce argument with a leading but conservative politician who felt that a Czech light opera would have to use folk-tunes throughout if it was to create a true national identity. Smetana strongly disagreed with him: "in this way a medley of different songs would arise, a sort of



PATRICK RING ▲

quodlibet, but not a unified artistic work." He received a libretto for a comic village tale "The Bartered Bride" in mid 1863 and set to work on it enthusiastically, completing the score in the Spring of 1866. By this time he was also at work on his third opera "Dalibor."

The success of "The Brandenburgers of Bohemia" provided an opportunity to stage "The Bartered Bride" and it was first seen on May 3th 1866. At this time the opera had spoken dialogue between the musical numbers. Smetana added further music and the recitatives to the opera at later dates. Initial success was not outstanding but the opera gradually became popular in Prague. It did not reach international fame until its presentation at the Vienna Festival in 1892. Since then it has been one of the best-loved of musical entertainments. As Smetana's biographer, Nejedly put it: "Mankind has always considered its special benefactors to be the artists who have been able to infuse gladness into human souls...in this respect the 19th century never saw a greater genius than Smetana".



PAT SHERIDAN ▲



PADDY RYAN ▲



WALTER HARRINGTON ▲

The work was composed in rather an irregular fashion. Smetana borrowed some of the music from his piano pieces "Wedding Scenes" of 1849, the delightful polka at the start of the opera coming from these works. he had the original libretto extensively redrafted, turning a one-act script into the present two-act format. Before the new text was delivered to him he had completed the brilliant overture, a most unusual order of events among operatic composers. Although there is much that is owed to Czech folk music in the style of composition, Smetana borrowed only one tune directly, which is used in the "furiant".

The polka and furiant were additions to the second version of the opera which was prepared for a Paris production which never took place. The third and final version of the score added recitatives in place of the spoken dialogue and was first seen in Prague in the Autumn of 1870. From this time on the opera established itself as a major favourite with Bohemian audiences.

Smetana was to move on to subjects he



PAT RUST ▲

thought more appropriate to the development of Czech nationalism— "Dalibor" and "Libuse" in particular—and rather looked down on "The Bartered Bride" as a somewhat trifling exercise in style, written to prove a point rather than for any deeper reasons. Although a number of the other completed eight operas, particularly the comedies, deserve more frequent revivals than they achieve at present, there is no doubt that "The Bartered Bride" is firmly on top of the Smetana popularity poll. As David Ewen has put it: "The opera is almost Mozartian in its blend of comedy and tenderness, with its insight into human frailties, and in its penetrating understanding of human motivations. What Smetana had failed to realise was that, though his touch was light and gay, and his purpose was sheer entertainment, he had plumbed more deeply into human psychology and emotion than he was able to do in his more serious and ambitious operas".

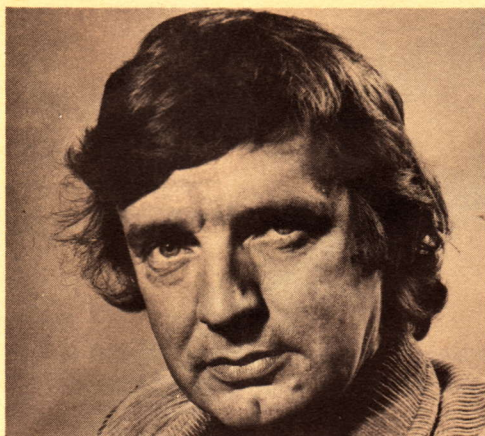
"Prodana Nevesta" had been translated as "The Bartered Bride" for so long that it is pointless to try to change it at this stage.



VERONICA McSWINEY ▲



MARGARET O'SULLIVAN ▲



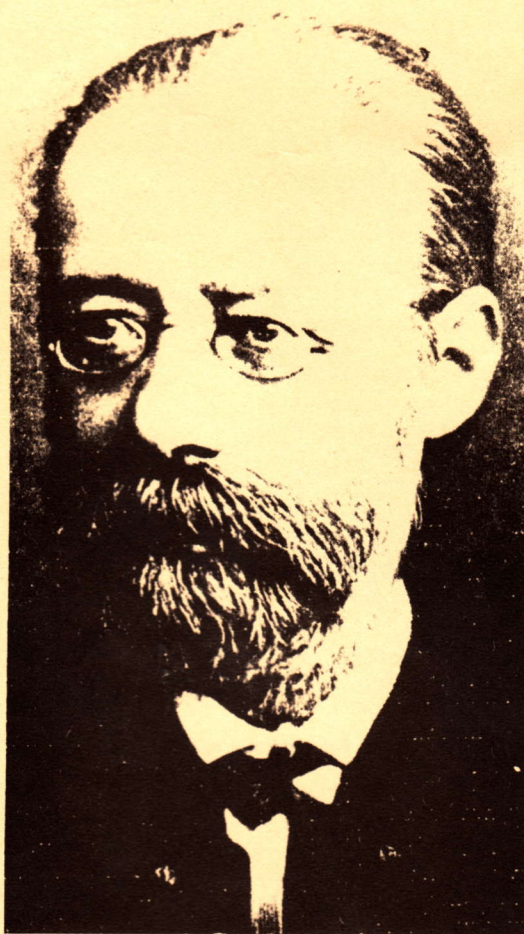
KENNETH EDWARDS ▲

However the title is inaccurate, the lady is only a fiancée. The German translation "Die Verkaufte Braut" causes confusion as "braut" can mean bride or fiancée. The young lady is sold, too, rather than "barter-



BREDA BERKELEY ▲

ed", but to barter can mean to dispose of for a consideration and Jenik does get 300 crowns for Marenka....but if you are new to the story I had better not give any more away! ●



BEDRICH SMETANA [1824-1884]

Irish National Opera wish to thank
An Chomhairle Éalaíon and Foras Éireann
for their continued financial support;
the Abbey Theatre and Irish Theatre Company
for rehearsal facilities.

Mr. George Colley T.D.

Artistic Advisors:

Veronica Dunne
Charles Lynch
Comdt. F. O'Callaghan
Michael O'Higgins
Dr. Hans W. Rosen



IRISH NATIONAL OPERA

Directors:

Gerald Duffy
Veronica McSwiney
Tony Ó Dálaigh
Paddy Ryan

Secretary:

Monica Cowley

Irish National Opera was founded to give Irish singers the opportunity of undertaking major operatic roles, to bring opera to provincial centres and to foster an interest in opera among the younger generation.

Details of activities to date:

OPERA		PERFORMANCES			
The Marriage of Figaro	<i>(1st production)</i>	...	...	...	35
La Boheme	...	...	...	...	20
Fidelio	...	...	...	...	1
Don Giovanni	...	...	...	...	43
Barber of Seville	...	...	...	...	41
Twelfth Night	...	...	...	...	3
Don Pasquale	...	...	...	...	31
Cinderella	...	...	...	...	43
The Secret Marriage	...	...	...	...	19
The Marriage of Figaro	<i>(2nd production)</i>	...	...	...	28
Operatic Concerts	...	...	...	...	66



In all, I.N.O. have visited over seventy venues in twenty-eight counties.

Artists who have appeared with the company include Dolores Burke, Anne Cant, Gertrude Carberry, Maureen Dillon, Patricia Dolan, Eileen Donlon, Evelyn Dowling, Veronica Dunne, Angela Feeney, Deirdre Grier-Delaney, Fionnuala Hough, Olive Jones, BeneMcAteer, Colette McGahon, Mabel McGrath, Veronica McSwiney, Ruth Maher, Anne Makower, Ann Moran, Celine Murphy, Suzanne Murphy, Winifred O'Dea, Margaret O'Sullivan, Nora Ring, Mary Sheridan, Olive Simpson, Violet Twomey, Brendan Cavanagh, Richard Cooper, Joseph Dalton, Martin Dempsey, Paul Dorgan, Gerald Duffy, Frank Dunne, Dan Farrelly, Edwin FitzGibbon, John Gibson, Courtney Kenny, Brendan Keyes, Brian Kissane, Peter McBrien, John O'Conor, Michael O'Dea, Colman Pearce, Sean Mitten, Patrick Ring, Pat Sheridan and William Young.

Organisations or individuals interested in being associated with performances in their areas are invited to contact:

Monica Cowley,
193 Ceannt Fort,
Dublin 8.